

# WORKERS WORLD

Workers and oppressed peoples of the world unite!

Dec. 10, 2009 Vol. 51 No. 49 50¢

## 'Money for jobs, not for war!' Anti-war protests confront escalation in Afghanistan

By John Catalinotto

Following months of Pentagon and ruling class pressure to expand the U.S. war in Central Asia, President Barack Obama formally announced he had already issued orders to send some 30,000 more troops to Afghanistan when he addressed West Point Army officers and the country on Dec. 1. His task was to sell the war's escalation to the population at home and to Washington's NATO allies abroad.

Protests reflecting the massive popular dismay with the war on Afghanistan were already taking place. Even as Obama was selling the escalation to the country, protesters were gathering in nearby Highland Falls, N.Y. The day after the talk, many anti-war and other progressive groups, including the International Action Center and the Troops Out Now Coalition, planned to be in Times Square. Demonstrations throughout the week were planned around the country.

When the administration presides over a "Jobs Summit" at the White House on Dec. 3, the Bail Out the People Movement will be on the sidewalk outside demanding money for "Jobs, not war!" for 30 million unemployed and underemployed workers.

Each additional troop in Afghanistan will cost \$1 million a year, by the latest rule of thumb. As the BOPM leaflet reads, "Instead of a jobs program, the president is sending tens of thousands of troops to war in Afghanistan at a cost of \$50 billion more, on top of the fortune already wasted on war."

The administration is expediting the deployment of its own forces while asking its NATO allies to send an additional 10,000 troops, which would build the total NATO force to more than 100,000. While Washington's junior partner in London has promised 500 more, Canada and Netherlands are discussing withdrawing their forces, French President Nicolas Sarkozy has said the present commitment is France's limit, and three German government officials have just been forced to resign following criticism over another massacre of Afghan civilians. On Nov. 28 in Spain, demonstrations were held in Madrid and other cities protesting the war in Afghanistan.

Obama is an able orator. He can explain the tactical complexities and difficulties the U.S. faces in Afghanistan—from the viewpoint of Pentagon generals and State Department analysts. None of this changes the basics.

The president's task is to sell a big lie: that the U.S.-NATO occupation of Afghanistan is for the good of the Afghan and U.S. people. In reality, the occupation has brought death and destruction to Afghans and forced U.S. youths to sacrifice their lives as they kill both resistance fighters and civilians.

The war aims to expand U.S. imperialist influence and power in Central Asia. U.S. victory in Afghanistan means increasing the power of U.S. and West-Europe-based big banks and corporations, the same ones that have been laying off workers and cutting wages at home.

There is a further complication for the administration. A USA-Today/Gallup Poll released in late November shows that 72 percent of Republicans support the escalation, while 57 percent of Democrats favor beginning a withdrawal from Afghanistan. No doubt the Democratic Party leaders in Congress will rally behind this war as they did behind the aggression against Iraq, Yugoslavia, etc. Still, to carry out the war escalation, the administration will have to rely most heavily on its vicious political enemies within the ruling establishment, while alienating its strongest rank-and-file supporters.

### The same big lies

The George W. Bush administration also tried to sell the U.S.-NATO occupation of Afghanistan with a series of big lies. The corporate media will undoubtedly trot them out again to try to justify the escalation.

The first lie is that the Taliban government is responsible for the Sept. 11 attacks. All the Taliban regime did, however, was tolerate al-Qaeda—itsself an organization nurtured by the U.S. during its Cold War subversion of the Soviet Union. The Taliban government in 2001 was prepared to negotiate the eviction of al-Qaeda when the Bush gang decided it would rather invade Afghanistan.

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WW PHOTO: LIZ GREEN

## 'Thanksgiving' myth exposed at 40th Nat'l Day of Mourning

By Workers World Boston bureau

Several hundred Native people and their supporters gathered in Plymouth, Mass., for the 40th annual National Day of Mourning, which is a protest of the U.S. Thanksgiving holiday and a day of mourning for Native ancestors who died as a result of the European invasion of the Americas.

Moonanum James, co-leader of United American Indians of New England, explained the true history of Thanksgiving. "According to

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Leonard Peltier:  
**We are still here!** 2



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# ‘Thanksgiving’ myth exposed at 40th Nat’l Day of Mourning

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popular myth, the Indians and the pilgrims sat down and had a wonderful dinner. Everyone lived happily ever after.

“Here is the truth: The pilgrims did not find an empty land any more than Columbus ‘discovered’ anything. Every inch of this land is Indian land. Upon first arriving, the pilgrims opened my ancestors’ graves and took our corn and bean supplies. Later, from the very harbor we can see from here, the English sold my ancestors as slaves for 220 shillings each. The first official ‘Day of Thanksgiving’ was proclaimed in 1637 by Governor Winthrop. He did so to celebrate the safe return of men from Massachusetts, who had gone to Mystic, Conn., to participate in the massacre of over 700 Pequot women, children and men.”

James concluded: “About the only true thing in the whole mythology is that these pitiful European strangers would not have survived their first several years in ‘New England’ were it not for the aid of Wampanoag people. What Native people got in return for this help was genocide, theft of our lands, and never-ending repression.”

A veteran, James also expressed his opposition to the U.S. wars on the people of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Juan González, who opened and closed the program with prayers to the Six Directions, read a statement from Chomanelaab’ Maam Ajq’ijaab’ (Council of Maya Elders in Guatemala). He called on those there to repeat after him, “loud as thunder so President Obama can hear us: Stop the War now! Stop the hushed military invasion of Latin America now! Immigration reform now! Free Leonard Peltier now!”

The Maya Elders sent a powerful statement expressing solidarity with all Indigenous peoples, the need for all to come together to protect Mother Earth, the need for “an All the Colors of the Earth Dream rather than the American Dream/Nightmare, without the war enterprises, without the Monsantos, without the Wall Street greed, without the oil cartels, without the forked-tongue talk politicians, without the corrupted fundamentalist religions, without the World Bank, without the IMF [International Monetary Fund].”

UAINE co-leader Mahtowin Munro remarked, “What happened in Gaza last winter was so much like the murdered Lakota children and mothers and elders who were thrown into mass graves at the Wounded Knee massa-

cre in 1890, except that the Israeli cowboys have more advanced weapons, such as tungsten DIME bombs and white phosphorus.”

She added: “The Israeli Defense Forces continue to block the delivery of basic construction supplies so that the people of Gaza are unable to rebuild their destroyed homes and schools and medical centers, and they continue to block needed medicines and most food aid. We must redouble our efforts to stop the many outrages committed on a daily basis against our Palestinian sisters and brothers. Being silent is not an option.”

Munro also noted that “about 800 undocumented workers are being held in Massachusetts prisons, including more than 200 just a couple of miles away in a Plymouth prison. Their crime: not having the proper paperwork. These ICE detainees are sometimes held for more than a year in overcrowded conditions and without adequate medical care.”

At this year’s rally, speaker after speaker called on President Obama to do the right thing and free Native political prisoner Leonard Peltier. Peltier has been imprisoned for more than 30 years on FBI frame-up charges and was recently denied parole. The prison system has said that he won’t be eligible for another parole hearing until the year 2024, when he would be 79.

The crowd—which included members of various Native nations, Latinos/as, African Americans, Haitians, Palestinians, Asians and white people—listened intently when Bert Waters from the Massachusetts Indian Commission read a statement from Peltier.

Rosalba González, a teacher, spoke about the importance of educating children about real history. Participants both laughed and groaned when González read aloud and explicated the words of a T-shirt worn by a young man detailing the horrors Native people are supposed to be “thankful” for.

Tiokasin Ghosthorse, a popular radio host on WBAI in New York, explained the importance of the meaning of the Lakota phrase “mitakuye oyasin” (“we are all related”).

Following a march through the streets of Plymouth, the crowd gathered at Plymouth Rock. James noted that his Wampanoag ancestors had taught the white settlers how to grow food and had helped to treat their sick. “We didn’t ask the pilgrims for their passports or their health insurance cards!” he said. □

## Never forget the real history of America

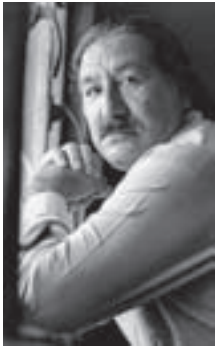
*Statement from Leonard Peltier read by Bert Waters at the 40th National Day of Mourning, Nov. 26, in Plymouth, Mass.*

Greetings and Hoka Hey! I would request everyone who can to stand up for a few moments. Stand up for our ancestors. Stand up for our children. Stand up for our country.

To the United American Indians of New England, your supporters, and people of conscience everywhere: What a great day this is! It’s always good to see our people come together as one mind, especially at this time. As we have seen for generations, this week and month American schools will be teaching students the myth of the pilgrims and Indians celebrating the first Thanksgiving. Children will be cutting out paper headbands and “woo-woeing” as they think Indians do—never thinking about the real Indians who suffered an immigrant onslaught, or the Indians still here. This process continues

the Americans’ bad habit of ignoring or falsifying their own history. I know it is easier to teach a fairy tale than to teach that the first Thanksgiving was a celebration of the massacre of defenseless Indian people, but facts are facts and this country needs to get them straight!

American families will be gathering and eating too much turkey and watching football, oblivious to an ongoing struggle for American Indian sovereignty and self-determination. While it’s always a good idea for people to come together and celebrate, we Indians offer a caution: Those who forget their history are doomed to repeat it, or have it righteously inflicted upon them! So overeaters



Leonard Peltier

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*this week...*

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# March protests death of detainee

Some 100 people gathered at the town square in Lumpkin, Ga., on Nov. 20 to protest the conditions at the nearby Stewart Detention Center, a privately owned prison that holds 1,800 immigrants awaiting deportation. Operated by the for-profit Corrections Corporation of America, the facility is located almost two miles outside of Lumpkin in an isolated area.

Following a series of speeches by immigrant rights activists and a former employee of the detention center, the crowd marched to the gates of the prison, where three large buses blocked the view of the

complex. Undeterred, the protesters held a memorial service for Roberto Martinez Medina, a 39-year-old worker from Mexico who died in March from a treatable heart infection after his pleas for medical assistance were ignored by prison staff. More than 100 immigrants have died while in custody of Immigration and Customs Enforcement in the last few years.

The action was organized by the Georgia Detention Watch and supported by numerous groups, including the SOA Watch.

—Dianne Mathiowetz

## Georgia



PHOTO: ROBERT WATKINS

## Cleveland

# Murders of women ignite outrage

By Sharon Danann  
Cleveland

Coalitions are forming in several Cleveland communities to address the murders of 11 Black women whose bodies were found in and around a house on Imperial Avenue in late October. Activists are holding rallies and vigils, meeting with public officials to present demands, developing better resources for women and the families of missing persons, and taking care of all the funeral arrangements for the 10 women whose remains have been identified.

Neighbors in the Imperial Avenue area had filed complaints about odors since 2007, but the sausage factory on the corner was blamed. Even women who battled alleged serial killer Anthony Sowell and escaped were not taken seriously by the authorities.

One such woman was Gladys Wade, who was bleeding and screaming in torn

clothing when she fled Sowell's home in December 2008. The case was brought to Cleveland Chief Prosecutor Victor Perez. "Not credible" was handwritten on the prosecutor's review. (Plain Dealer, Nov. 14) Sowell, a convicted rapist, had been arrested and released without being charged. No attempt was made to collect blood from Sowell's steps or elsewhere in his house.

According to the coroner's office, five of the women whose bodies were recovered from Sowell's house died after December 2008: Kim Yvette Smith, Nancy Cobbs, Amelda Hunter, Janice Webb and Telacia Fortson. The fact that their deaths could have been prevented had Wade been treated as "credible" is a source of widespread outrage.

Only two of the 10 identified victims were officially reported missing. Media and blog commentaries against the families have been widespread, but the police department will frequently refuse to take

a missing persons report without evidence that a missing adult is "endangered." This practice often means several days' delay in collecting crucial evidence.

The women who encountered horrendous deaths on Imperial Avenue were similar to many other missing persons in having histories of drug use or criminal records. (Plain Dealer, Nov. 15) These histories increased their vulnerability and their families' silence due to the fear that their loved ones may end up with a prison sentence.

Wall Street's economic Katrina has left Cleveland with high job losses and foreclosure rates and created abandoned neighborhoods and vulnerable people. Resources go to wars, prisons and bailouts, not drug treatment, homeless shelters, rape crisis centers and mental health.

### Deaths spur anger, activism

A group at the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Center is pressing Cuyahoga

County Sheriff Bob Reid to set up a missing persons department and is writing a guide for women of resources that are outside the justice system.

A march on Nov. 21 dedicated to the 11 murdered women drew nearly 200 people, mostly young. It was the second of a series of marches initiated by media personality Basheer Jones to bring attention to the neglected neighborhoods and call for an end to violence. With the red, black and green Black liberation flag at the head, the march stepped briskly down East 79th Street to Hough Avenue, the site of major rebellion 40 years ago.

On Nov. 16, Black and white women activists from Imperial Women, a newly formed group, met with representatives from Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson's office to demand an investigation of Chief Prosecutor Perez, Cleveland Law Director Robert Triozzi, Chief of Police Michael McGrath, and Safety Director Martin

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# Off-duty Philadelphia officer kills teenager

By Betsey Piette  
Philadelphia

Despite seven civilian complaints investigated by Internal Affairs, including some from his neighbors, Sgt. Frank Tepper was never brought up on any charges by the Philadelphia Police Department, where he worked for 13 years. On Nov. 21 the department's inaction turned deadly when Tepper shot and killed a young neighbor, 21-year-old William Panas Jr.

Tepper, who was off-duty at the time, fatally shot Panas during a street fight in the Port Richmond neighborhood where both lived. According to area residents, the fight involving many of Tepper's relatives, including his own son, spilled out of a party at Tepper's home.

Panas and some friends were walking by and got caught up in the fight. Panas tried to break up the fight, but ended up on the ground, fighting with Tepper's son. Tepper, who witnesses reported was clearly intoxicated at the time, pointed a gun at Panas and said, "Back up or I'll shoot you." When Panas, who was unarmed and had his hands in the air, said, "No, you won't," Tepper said, "Oh no?" and fired his gun, shooting Panas in the heart. (Philadelphia Daily News, Nov. 24)

William Panas Sr. and many neighbors believe this was murder. But no charges have been filed against Tepper, who was removed from his street job with Philadelphia's Civil Affairs Unit and upgraded to administrative desk work. Tepper was seen roaming around the neighborhood

until Nov. 24, when he abandoned his home. Police remain on the scene, allegedly to protect Tepper's house from his neighbors.

Meanwhile, no such protection was provided to neighbors who had reported several incidents of threats from this cop over the years.

In 2002 Tepper went in search of a teenager who allegedly bullied his 8-year-old son. Debra Spencer said Tepper used Mace on her 17-year-old son and drew his gun against him and some other youth. An Internal Affairs investigator warned Tepper against taking the law into his own hands while off-duty. (Philadelphia Inquirer, Nov. 25)

Donna Walker, who filed a complaint alleging Tepper choked her son during the 2002 incident, also reported a case a few years earlier when Tepper waved his gun at neighbors after one of his relatives was hit with a snowball.

In 1995 Tepper got involved in a car chase after two men allegedly taunted his fiancée. Tepper had earlier been in a bar wearing most of his uniform, in violation of department policy. A complaint filed by one of the men claimed Tepper repeatedly bumped his car and hit one of the men in the head with his gun.

In each case where Tepper was the subject of complaints, he was exonerated and the accusations were dismissed as "unfounded," even when Internal Affairs investigators described his behavior as "unprofessional" and in "direct violation of departmental policy."

Police regulations bar off-duty officers from taking action in personal disputes. Yet this is at least the fourth case in the past two years in which Philadelphia police were involved in murder or assaults while off-duty.

Attorney Alan Yatvin, in a civil suit against officers in one of these cases, pre-

sented a list of 26 cases in which Philadelphia officers abused their authority. A federal jury found that in cases of off-duty misconduct, the police department didn't properly train, investigate or discipline officers. (Philadelphia Daily News, Nov. 24) □

## 'In Prison My Whole Life' screening on 28th anniversary of Mumia Abu-Jamal's incarceration

By Betsey Piette  
Philadelphia

Dec. 9 marks the 28th anniversary of the imprisonment of political prisoner and journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal for the murder of a Philadelphia police officer. To observe this important anniversary and support ongoing efforts to free Mumia, the Philadelphia International Action Center will host a showing of the 2008 documentary, "In Prison My Whole Life."

Abu-Jamal was arrested on Dec. 9, 1981, the day William Francome was born in Great Britain. Francome and acclaimed actor Colin Firth, the film's executive producer, made the award-winning film to explore the injustices in Abu-Jamal's case as well as the past and present socio-political climate in the U.S.

"In Prison My Whole Life" looks at inconsistencies with old evidence as well as new evidence in the case that create a basis for reasonable doubt. It also explores U.S. history and the justice system through the case of death-row inmate Abu-Jamal, and includes interviews with Angela Davis, Dead Prez, Mos Def, Noam Chomsky, Robert Meeropol, Russell Simmons, Snoop Dogg, Steve Earle and others.

The film will be aired on Dec. 8 at 7 p.m. at the Calvary Church, 48th and Baltimore Avenue in Philadelphia. A discussion with Pam Africa from International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal will follow. For more information contact PhillyIAC@peoplesmail.net. □





# KARA demands: No development without a community benefits agreement

“This is a public project, and its development must improve the lives of working people in the community,” said Desiree Pilgrim-Hunter, a leader of the Kingsbridge Armory Redevelopment Alliance, on the steps of City Hall Nov. 17. Pilgrim-Hunter spoke after a stormy hearing on a proposal for a mall on the site of the historic Kingsbridge Armory in the northwest Bronx, New York.

“When billionaire developers are accepting tens of millions of dollars in tax benefits to build in our communities,” said Bronx Borough President Rubén Díaz Jr., “it is not a radical idea to ask that the jobs they create be good jobs.”

Stuart Appelbaum, president of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union, said: “Any project that creates

permanent jobs that keep people in poverty does absolutely nothing to benefit the people of this city. In fact it causes harm.” His call to reject the Related Companies’ plans to redevelop the Kingsbridge Armory was joined by representatives of the New York City Central Labor Council, Service Employees Local 32BJ, the Hotel Trades Council, the United Federation of Teachers, and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, District Council 37.

Deputy Mayor for Economic Development Robert Lieber testified that the Mayor’s office is against requiring retailers that receive government subsidies to pay a living wage.



PHOTO: KARA

Kingsbridge Armory Redevelopment Alliance members march to City Hall, Nov. 17.

A vote on the development proposal, both in committee and in the full City Council, is set for Dec. 9. KARA is mobilizing all its supporters to pressure for a strong NO vote.

—Dee Knight

# Students and workers strike, occupy, fight back

By Scott Williams

On Nov. 19, thousands of students, workers and faculty on campuses across the University of California system protested and blockaded a meeting of the U.C. Regents, where the regents approved 32 percent tuition and fee increases, furloughs of campus workers and continued budget cuts. Several days of huge protests, seen throughout the media, ended with nearly 60 arrests and showed the potential of opposition to the “business as usual” attacks on jobs and education by the U.C. administrators.

On Nov. 20, protests intensified as six buildings across the U.C. system were occupied by students. Students demanded the recall of fired housekeepers, more money from the state of California for education, and many more extensive demands based around their right to education, jobs and affordable housing.

At the University of Illinois, graduate student workers voted to strike on Nov. 16. Just two days later, after thousands of workers participated on picket lines and hundreds of classes were cancelled, the 2,600 graduate students won tuition cov-

erage and wage increases.

Students, workers and faculty from across the world have decided that it is time to protest, occupy and strike. In Germany on Nov. 17, for example, 80,000 school and university students hit the streets and went on strike in 60 cities. More than 60 universities have been occupied by students in opposition to tuition hikes and budget cuts in the past two weeks.

Short of mobilizing, striking and occupying, students, faculty and workers have no voice in the decisions of their universities. At most public universities, major decisions about programs, tuition and budget cuts lie in the hands of a dozen unelected, unrepresentative millionaires.

Although seen as havens of “liberal” thinking and progressive social movements, our universities serve the purpose of increasing profit margins, whether by educating workers, providing subsidized research for pharmaceutical companies and defense contractors, investing billions of foundation money into the stock market, or constantly privatizing the functions of the university.

Universities are important points of

struggle in times of crisis. Whether it’s the cuts and eliminations of programs representing oppressed peoples, the declining numbers of tenured professors who receive a decent wage and benefits, or the increased short-staffing of workers who are the backbone of the university, universities remain, and have always been, an important arena of social conflict.

Students, faculty and workers are not responsible for the gambling speculation and overproduction that led to the economic crisis and subsequent job losses and tuition hikes. By forcing them to pay for the crisis, administrators are being met with a growing resistance.

The occupations and strikes at universities in California, Illinois and throughout the world show an enormous potential for the struggle against the boom-and-bust capitalist system. While cuts, furloughs and tuition hikes have no end in sight, now students and workers are learning to struggle and unify in their opposition to university leaders who cut jobs and education in the name of balanced budgets.

Williams is a member of the North Carolina chapter of the youth group Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST).

## On the Picket

### Hotel workers rolling strikes

The latest San Francisco hotel workers to hold a three-day strike, beginning Nov. 18, were those at the Westin St. Francis Hotel. Three-day rolling strikes at upscale hotels began at the Grand Hyatt on Nov. 5 and spread to the Palace Hotel on Nov. 13. A boycott of those hotels, as well as Le Méridien and Hyatt at Fisherman’s Wharf, has been called by UNITE HERE Local 2, which represents the 9,000 room cleaners, cooks, dishwashers, bell persons, servers and bartenders at 62 high-end hotels. Their contract expired on Aug. 14, and ever since they’ve marched, picketed and rallied.

The hotel magnates are trying to force the workers to accept a contract that jacks up their health care premiums. But workers like Lupe Chavez, a Hilton room cleaner for 29 years, see through the bosses’ demands. “We made them millions of dollars, and they complain about paying insurance,” she said in an article posted Sept. 25 on [www.unitehere2.org](http://www.unitehere2.org). ¡La lucha continúa!

### Native farmers charge USDA with loan discrimination

Thousands of Native American farmers and ranchers brought a class-action lawsuit in 1999 charging that the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s loan programs discriminated against them between 1981 and 1999. The plaintiffs are hoping their lawsuit, filed in 1999, will finally be settled under the Obama administration. (After African-American farmers filed a complaint earlier this year against the USDA for failing to adequately notify class members of the 2000 filing deadline for their lawsuit won in 1999, President Obama requested an additional \$1.25 billion for those who missed the deadline.)

In April the new secretary of the USDA called for an independent study of past and pending civil rights complaints, citing a 2008 Government Accountability Office report that the USDA’s civil rights office had not addressed its backlog of complaints. The lawyer for the Native suit estimates that plaintiffs are owed up to \$1 billion in lost income.

The problem is succinctly summed up by Montana rancher Luther Crasco, who declared bankruptcy after being denied a USDA loan for a crucial irrigation system: “When [Native farmers are

# Protesters say: ‘Save Braddock Hospital’

By Cheryl LaBash  
Pittsburgh

Undaunted by pouring rain, hundreds of community residents, students and United Steelworker union retirees in Pittsburgh blocked the street in front of the Braddock hospital on Nov. 19 to declare that the struggle to keep the facility open was only the beginning.

The University of Pittsburgh Medical Center slated the closing of the 103-year-old hospital as it began construction on a \$250 million hospital in Monroeville, Pa., adjacent to a competing hospital in a more economically upscale area. UPMC’s decision to close Braddock as of Jan. 31, 2010, takes place during the nationwide fight to win health care for all against the interests of insurance companies, pharmaceutical giants and health care behemoths like UPMC, all of whom are determined to keep their profit margins growing.



WW PHOTO: CHERYL LABASH

Both single-payer universal health care organizers and the Steelworkers union see the fight to keep UPMC Braddock hospital open as a front line in the fight for quality, accessible and affordable health care for all.

## Pittsburgh

Steelworkers International Vice-President Fred Redmond spoke from the back of the flatbed-truck stage. He said, “UPMC has made a unilateral decision to remove this hospital from this community—take away trauma care, take away prenatal care, take away care from the people who need it the most. This is a broken system. ... We are going to do everything that is humanly possible to try to change the

mind of this multinational corporation, UPMC—a billion dollar corporation, a corporation that has made a decision to close this hospital based on profit as opposed to people. ... Let’s remain focused to see to it that the people of Braddock

have a health care facility that they can rely on. That the people in Braddock are not second class citizens and the UPMC puts back the money into the community that has made them rich over the years by keeping this hospital open.”

Other speakers included the current USW local president from the Edgar Thomson Steel Works, whose smokestacks loom just a couple of blocks from the hospital. He pointed out that the nearby emergency room at UPMC Braddock means life or death for any worker suffering an industrial accident at the mill.

Speakers echoed the many signs held by protesters noting that UPMC CEO Jeffrey Romoff pulls down \$4.45 million per year heading the nonprofit—thus tax exempt—medical giant attempting to pull the plug on UPMC Braddock.

In what would challenge the general view of what not-for-profit means, the

Continued on page 5



Line

By Sue Davis

forced to] sell out, it's a white man that buys the land, because there ain't no Indian around here who can secure a loan." (Washington Post, Sept. 29)

## CLUW defends women's reproductive freedom

At its national convention in October the Coalition of Labor Union Women passed a resolution supporting comprehensive health care for all, including the need for safe, legal, accessible reproductive health services for all women.

On Nov. 14 CLUW issued a statement affirming that "Women must have the right to make their own childbearing decisions—this is our civil right. We are outraged by the Stupak amendment to the Affordable Health Care for America Act (HR3962). ... [It] prohibits women who receive federal subsidies from using their own personal, private funds to buy insurance plans that include abortion services. ... Health care reform must not come at the expense of women."

The statement urged union members to sign petitions opposing the Stupak amendment at the Web sites of the Planned Parenthood Federation and the National Partnership of Women & Families.

## S.F. Labor Council condemns Honduran election

Following up on a resolution passed in September condemning the June coup d'état in Honduras, the San Francisco Labor Council unanimously passed a resolution on Nov. 23 "in solidarity with the heroic people of Honduras as they resist the savage repression of a military dictatorship, and fight to win real democracy and sovereignty for their country."

In addition to sending official letters to congressional representatives and President Obama detailing a list of five demands for measures that should be taken immediately against the illegal government, the resolution requested that the U.S. "denounce and refuse to recognize the results of the Nov. 29th elections or any electoral process organized under the repressive coup regime."

The Council is mandated to work with other labor and community organizations "to develop a reliable support network for the National Resistance Front against the Coup, and for the labor unions that are at the center of the Resistance movement in Honduras." □

UPMC Web site describes itself this way: "UPMC is an \$8 billion integrated global health enterprise headquartered in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and one of the leading nonprofit health systems in the United States. As western Pennsylvania's largest employer, with 50,000 employees, UPMC is transforming the economy of the region into one based on medicine, research and technology. By integrating 20 hospitals, 400 doctors' offices and outpatient sites, long-term care facilities and a major health insurance services division, and in collaboration with its academic partner, the University of Pittsburgh Schools of the Health Sciences, UPMC has advanced the quality and efficiency of health care and developed internationally renowned programs in transplantation, cancer, neurosurgery, psychiatry, orthopedics, and sports medicine, among others. UPMC is commercializing its medical and technological expertise by nurturing new companies, developing strategic business relationships with some of the world's leading multinational corporations and expanding into international markets, including Italy, Ireland, the United Kingdom, Cy-



# Workers, students protest economic injustices

## Students say NO to education cuts

Hundreds of students rallied at Wayne State University in Detroit Nov. 23 to protest the elimination of the Michigan Promise Scholarship and other education cuts by the state legislature.

Students demanded an immediate reinstatement of the Promise Scholarships, which provide between \$1,000 and \$4,000 in assistance for 100,000 college students from low-income households. Students at the rally testified that they had received letters from the state ordering them to return funds they had already received! This outrageous act by the state was denounced at the rally and met by chants of "No cuts, no fees—education should be free!"

After the rally a delegation of students marched through campus and briefly took over various streets, where they were threatened with arrests by campus and Detroit police. The students faced down the cops, chanting, "This is the hour for student power!"

## International workers' solidarity

Canadian Auto Workers Local 195 and their supporters from Canada and the U.S. held a press conference and rally at Comerica Bank in downtown Detroit Nov. 24. Canadian workers at Aradco and Aramco, a division of Catalina Precision, have been denied their severance, termination and vacation pay by Comerica Bank, a Catalina creditor. Workers are owed \$2.4 million Canadian.

"We are targeting Comerica because they are the ones holding the purse strings for Catalina. Comerica is the major creditor, looking to sell off or auction off the assets in both of these facilities in order to attempt to recoup any debt Cata-

prus, and Qatar."

Braddock is a small, very poor town along the banks of the Monongahela River, adjacent to Pittsburgh and the home of Carnegie's first mill, now with fewer than 3,000 residents, down from its peak of 20,000. Similar small communities like Rankin, Wilksburg, Homestead and McKeesport, broken by the destruction of the area's steel jobs, now receive refugees from Pittsburgh's much lauded rebirth, which is being effected through the gentrification of primarily African-American neighborhoods in the Hill District and the Northside, where sports stadiums gleam.

Already the Wilksburg City Council has unanimously voted to support the fight to keep UPMC Braddock open, pointing out that Wilksburg has no emergency room. Braddock Mayor Fetterman reported that officials in Turtle Creek, North Braddock, Munhall, Rankin, Forest Hills, Homestead, West Homestead and Swissvale are supporting the campaign, which will include petitioning in Pittsburgh and protests at UPMC headquarters and its CEO's personal residence as well as possible legal action. □

lina owes them. Yet the workers have not received a penny from this employer or Comerica," said CAW Local 195 president Gerry Farnham at the rally. Comerica received \$2.3 billion in bailout funds from the federal government in 2008 through the Troubled Assets Relief Program.

Two plants based in Windsor, Ontario, employed 80 members of CAW Local 195. Catalina, which made parts for Chrysler, shut down the two plants in March. At that time the workers occupied the plant to prevent the machines from being moved.

On Nov. 16 the workers and their supporters formed a human chain around the plants to prevent potential buyers of the machines from viewing the equipment. The next day the workers shut down an auction at a local hotel by taking over the room where the auction was to be held.

Farnham told the media, "It's not often in recent years that we have been able to pull together a demonstration involving supporters of workers' rights on both sides of the border."

Other speakers included Jerry Diaz, assistant to the national CAW president; Mike Melo, CAW chairperson at Aramco; Dave Ivers of Metro Detroit AFL-CIO; John Riehl of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 207; David Sole of United Auto Workers Local 2334; Abayomi Azikiwe of the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions and Utility Shutoffs and the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War & Injustice; Wendy Thompson of the Auto Workers Caravan and former president of UAW Local 235 at American Axle; and Michael Wells, a whistleblower fired from Comerica.

In a historic and momentous act of international workers' solidarity, the United Electrical workers Local 1110 from Chicago sent a \$300 donation to CAW 195. "We are proud that you have decided

By Bryan G. Pfeifer

to fight for what you are owed," UE 1110 said in a statement read at the rally. "We also faced a similar problem when our company, Republic Windows and Doors, closed without paying us our vacations, severance and insurance. Bank of America, who foreclosed the company, refused to pay what we were owed. We occupied that factory and won. With unity and aggressive struggle you will win too."

## Restaurant workers protest

The Restaurant Opportunities Center of Michigan formed in June 2008 and is waging a campaign against the Andiamo restaurant chain. ROC-MI charges that Andiamo has robbed tens of thousands of dollars in unpaid wages from workers; is guilty of discriminatory employment practices at the restaurants; forced workers to work unpaid overtime; and has illegally fired workers, among other violations.

On Nov. 5 about 100 workers and community supporters delivered a letter to Andiamo management demanding a meeting to discuss the grievances of workers from the "front and back of the house," meaning cooks, servers, bussers and hosts. Andiamo refused to respond, so a protest was held Nov. 19 in front of one of the restaurants. After these actions, Bertha Piña, a mother of five children and a six-year employee at Andiamo, was summarily fired for what ROC-MI says is her participation in fighting against Andiamo's workplace practices.

A mass protest took place in front of Andiamo in Dearborn, Mich., Nov. 24 in response to the firing of Piña and Andiamo's refusal to respond to ROC-MI. A loud, multinational crowd of more than 150 participated in moving picket lines for more than two hours. ROC has filed an Unfair Labor Practice and other legal charges against the restaurant and is discussing its next actions in an effort to achieve justice for all of the Andiamo workers. □

# Murders of women ignite outrage

*Continued from page 3*

Flask. They also insist an "Imperial Alert" be set up, similar to the "Amber Alert" system but encompassing missing adults as well as children.

Journalist Kathy Wray Coleman, an organizer of the group, told WW: "At least five of those women died in vain because authorities ignored reports of alleged rape or other violent crimes reported prior to the time they went missing. We believe they did so because of a disrespect of both women and the Black community. That's unacceptable and somebody should and will be held accountable."

A rally sponsored by Imperial Women on Nov. 24 brought together people from a variety of organizations at the house where the bodies were found. Imperial Women is calling for a review of all police reports marked "not credible" over the past 10 years and taking the position that

no reports of rape should be deemed "not credible."

Women revealed their rape experiences for the first time in decades and spoke of being "raped a second time when reporting it to the police." The high-energy chants were "Woman power!" and "We're in the streets!"

Another group is sponsoring a march on Nov. 30 to arrive at Cleveland City Hall, where each marcher will sign in and write "Sowell 11" next to their name. The march is calling for a missing persons unit in the Cleveland Police Department and an increase of officers in the sexual offenders department.

All across Cleveland the words "racism" and "sexism" are being spoken loud and clear in relation to the neglect of poor Black women. Everywhere people are standing up and saying, "We are not throw-away people!" □



# Municipal bonds and urban crisis

# Finance capital’s role in the destruction of U.S. cities

By **Abayomi Azikiwe**  
Editor, **Pan-African News Wire**  
Detroit

Two significant events have occurred in Detroit, a majority African-American city, that warrant the attention of people concerned about the plight and future of U.S. urban centers. Democratic Gov. Jennifer Granholm’s appointment of an emergency financial manager to oversee the affairs of the public school system represents a direct attack on the people of Detroit’s right to self-determination.

The other was the re-election of Mayor Dave Bing, who ran on a theme of reducing the budget deficit through cutting jobs, salaries and city services. He proposed to drastically reduce the city’s ailing transportation system, directed intimidation attacks against the city unions and imposed a mandatory 10-percent wage cut on all nonunion employees.

The rationale behind the emergency financial manager appointment purportedly stemmed from the school system’s rising budget deficit and repeated claims of corruption and fund mismanagement. The Detroit school system has a deficit of approximately \$300 million, along with a decreasing student enrollment that results in less funding every year from the state government.

The city is reported to have a budget deficit of \$250-300 million and its population will probably show a significant decline in the 2010 census.

Despite these dire economic circumstances, new bond proposals have recently been introduced. The newly appointed emergency financial manager, Robert Bobb, initiated a bond scheme that was put before the voters in the November elections.

Voters were told that federal stimulus money would be available if they voted in favor of issuing \$500 million in bonds to build new schools and refurbish existing ones. Proposal S was trumpeted by most of the corporate media as a means of rebuilding the school district.

Although there was opposition to Proposal S, the initiative passed by a substantial margin as a result of the overwhelming media campaign and the relatively low turnout in the elections.

After Bing’s re-election, it was announced that the mayor would seek City Council approval to issue \$250 million in new municipal bonds to meet the current financial crisis.

Historically people in Detroit have

voted to tax themselves in order to maintain city services and public employment. Since the tenure of Detroit’s first African-American mayor, Coleman A. Young, residents have repeatedly approved bond proposals under the notion that the city’s declining economic status would require sacrifice.

According to the Detroit Free Press, “Municipal bonds are typically issued to allow local governments to borrow money for large capital improvements to bridges, roads, power plants or sewer systems. In Detroit’s case, the money would be used to chip away at the city’s debt, which is forecast to grow to \$480 million by the end of the next fiscal year and to \$750 million in fiscal year 2011-12.” (Nov. 20)

### The role of bond rating agencies

Detroit’s bond rating has been reduced to junk status and as a result, the cost of borrowing by the city government has increased.

The determination of the value of municipal bonds lies with three major bond rating agencies: Standard & Poor’s, Fitch Ratings and Moody’s Investors Service.

Although the issuing of these bonds comes at a financially critical time, it is important to note that Detroit residents will ultimately be responsible for securing the returns on these investments.

Municipal bonds are rated to supposedly indicate to potential investors the probability that these bonds will default. Such an evaluation can drastically alter the cost of the maintenance and use of public infrastructure. The evaluations can determine whether a city can keep its existing workforce or whether it has to lay off thousands of public employees and reduce services.

The discrimination inherent in the entire rating process is often overlooked in corporate media accounts of bond values. Cities that are predominantly African American and working class tend to have lower bond ratings.

John Yinger, trustee professor of Public Administration and Economics at Syracuse University, drew an analogy between the redlining used to charge African Americans higher interest and insurance premium rates, and the discriminatory methodology in bond rating: “Thanks to municipal bonds ratings, citizens must pay more for infrastructure in some jurisdictions than in others. The question is whether this variation is entirely ‘legitimate,’ in the sense that it is

based solely on factors that society deems acceptable, or is to some degree ‘unfair,’ in the sense that it is based on factors such as the racial and ethnic composition of a jurisdiction, that businesses should not consider.” (“Municipal Bond Ratings and Citizen’s Rights,” December 2006)

The bond ratings agencies are largely unregulated. They are not required to provide objective evaluations of the cities or the reasons why they are suffering economically.

### Fightback program needed

It is important that workers and community organizations focus on the role of municipal bonds and bond rating agencies in the current economic crisis. The payment of interest on debt is a major factor in the decline of the cities.

If demands were made to impose a moratorium on debt payments, it would expose the inherently racist character of the bond rating agencies and the financial sector of the ruling class. The interest charged on these funds is based on discriminatory practices that unfairly punish urban areas where people of color reside.

The cuts in Detroit, which are mandated through the banks and bond rating agencies, are not enough to satisfy the profit-making requirements of the banks that have already been bailed out by the Federal Reserve Bank.

The credit burden imposed on the people in Detroit has not made the surrounding predominantly white and middle-class suburbs immune from the economic crisis. Overall, the state of Michigan’s tax revenue has dropped drastically. Earlier this year it was reported that the decline in sales and income tax revenue was costing the state government \$500 million per month.

Recently in West Bloomfield, an affluent suburb outside Detroit, 2,000 people protested the more than \$200 million in cutbacks in education funding. Suburban school districts are laying off teachers and eliminating programs. Suburban cities are laying off public employees.

Workers and the oppressed must stand up and demand that their city governments refuse to pay the interests on bank loans as well as the excessive costs of municipal bonds.

These demands can be raised in conjunction with the need for a moratorium on foreclosures, evictions and utility shutoffs, and an effective jobs program. The use of bond ratings to further squeeze the residents of urban areas must also be halted. □

# The crisis &

By **Fred Goldstein**

**Depression.** The present crisis is the worst since the Great Depression. But it is not only the worst crisis since the Depression. It has the same fundamental elements as the Depression.

**The system will not recover.** It is similar not just because of the rising unemployment; not just because so many trillions of dollars have been spent to keep the capitalist system from collapsing; not only because of the great speculative bubble that burst; and not only because of the widespread suffering of the workers and the communities.

It is similar to the Depression, which lasted 10 years and ended only with a world war, because the capitalist system is not going to have a genuine economic recovery—that is, a capitalist expansion of such magnitude that it could overcome the deepening crisis of widespread mass unemployment.

The capitalist economy in the U.S. only recovered from the Depression by massive government spending on war preparation and war itself. Without that spending there would have been no markets and no demand for the products of U.S. industry. The Depression would only have deepened. Capitalism was suffering from a crisis of overproduction which had reached the point of no recovery.

**The means of recovery are exhausted.** After World War II the U.S. capitalist economy kept itself going by war: the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the spending for a vast military buildup against the Soviet Union and China during the Cold War, including Reagan’s \$2-trillion anti-Soviet military spending program.

It also kept itself going by pouring money into the banks and corporations at crucial moments of crisis. The capitalist government bailed out Chrysler; it bailed out the savings and loan associations in the 1980s; it bailed out Wall Street after the 1987 crash—the Long Term Capital hedge fund in 1999. It poured money into the housing market and Wall Street during the downturn of 2000-2001.

Capital has kept its profits up and fueled its expansion by ruthlessly lowering wages through technological restructuring, union-busting, and fostering a worldwide wage competition to drive wages down.

Imperialism itself is a sign of crisis in the capitalist system. It means that the system cannot go forward within the framework of the nation state by “normal” economic means. It must go abroad to plunder and loot peoples in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East to seek superprofits.

Right now the Pentagon is bogged down in Afghanistan and Pakistan; it still has well over 100,000 troops in Iraq. The military budget is \$700 billion for the coming year—enough money to rebuild decaying cities and put workers back to work. But Washington has not been able to conquer territory and pay for its war of aggression with profits from abroad. The attempt to expand the empire has become a drain on the system and is aggravating the crisis at home.

All of these means have already been pushed to the limit. Trillions in bailout money have not been able to revive the economy and stop the layoffs. The military is now overbuilt; what remains is high-tech and cannot mobilize millions of workers in war production. Wages have been going down for 30 years and the working class is being pauperized. The historical sources of revival are exhausted.

**Workers are being told the lie that things will get better.** The working class in the United States has lived through 10 post-WWII recessions. After each one the



**“Low-Wage Capitalism by Fred Goldstein is a most timely work, as the working class prepares for a fightback during the greatest crisis of capitalism since the Great Depression.”**

**Clarence Thomas**, ILWU Local 10  
and Co-chair, Million Worker March Movement

“Patriarchal prejudice serves capitalism in two ways: it keeps the whole working class divided, and it holds down wages for women and for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender workers.

**Low-Wage Capitalism** shows the necessity and the great potential for solidarity among all the low-wage workers of the world.”

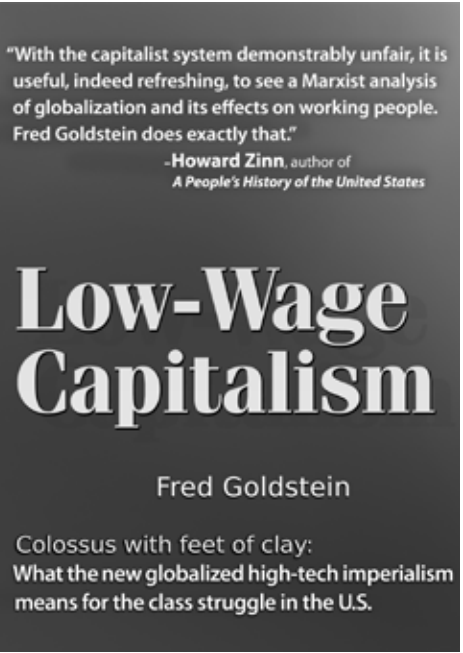
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Nat’l Executive Officer  
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# the prospects for resistance: an outline

system revived and expanded; employment eventually returned for the vast majority of the workers.

The Obama administration, various media outlets and economic so-called “experts” are continually hammering away at this idea. They tell the workers that it takes time for the economy to recover and employment lags behind, so just hang on.

In the meantime, Congress keeps extending unemployment insurance benefits and food stamp assistance in order to keep the workers passive and to forestall a resistance movement.

This hope that they must endure long enough for things to get better is shaping the overall psychology of the workers at the moment. But this is temporary because the crisis is only beginning to play out. It must be emphasized over and over again that the crisis is in its early stages. There are many seeds of future shocks to come.

**Era of “jobless recovery.”** Workers are facing a jobless recovery with no end in sight. A jobless recovery is where production and profits begin to revive but unemployment remains the same or gets worse. This trend in the U.S. capitalist economy began in 1991 and has been getting more and more severe.

During all the crises in the post-WWII period, jobs returned when production began to rise. After the 1991 downturn, however, jobs were lost or none were added for over 12 months after the capitalist recovery. It took 18 months to get to pre-recession job levels.

After the 2000-2001 crash of the technology bubble, 594,000 jobs were lost in the first 27 months of the downturn; it took four years for employment to return to pre-recession levels.

The present jobless recovery is a continuation of this trend on a much more drastic level. The economy was reported to have grown at an annual rate of 3.5 percent in the 3rd quarter of 2009. But during these three months of economic upturn, 726,000 jobs have been lost! These figures do not count the rise of millions of discouraged workers or workers forced to work part time.

**Labor productivity, low wages and the crisis.** Nothing shows the crisis of capitalism more than the fact that profitability and increased production are taking place on the basis of cutting jobs. In addition, those workers still employed are being pressured to work harder, faster and produce more. Wages are being cut as the bosses squeeze out every last minute of labor.

For three decades ruthless technological innovation has all been directed against the workers. Capitalism has made workers more and more productive. With technology it has transferred the skill of workers to machines and software. The bosses have always tried to reduce the skills of workers and pay them less. Going to school to get a skill will not really benefit the masses, since the capitalists are destroying skilled jobs.

The bosses have used the crisis to step up productivity. Their plans are to reduce hiring if there is a recovery. This shows how impossible it will be, under the profit system, to rehire the tens of millions of workers now unemployed and underemployed.

U.S. capitalism has followed the inevitable logic of the profit system to its end. Capital must try to reduce labor and wages relentlessly. This is the other side of the pursuit of profit. But capital must also expand or die. Thus, in destroying wages, it must destroy its market, while at the same time expanding its capacity to produce. This process has now reached the point where it is leading to a total breakdown of society—and is posing a threat to the existence of the working class and the entire planet.

The working class is unaware of this

long-term trend in capitalism and of the magnitude of the crisis right now. But they will become aware as the crisis deepens and spreads and does not go away. It is only a matter of time before they begin to fight back as a class.

**Signs of motion among workers, students and activists.** While the working class and the labor movement in general are still in retreat after decades of attack followed by economic crisis, there are growing pockets of resistance, both inside and outside the labor movement.

The low point of the labor movement in the present crisis came during the bankruptcy proceedings for General Motors and Chrysler. The leadership of the most powerful industrial union in the U.S., the United Auto Workers, agreed to humiliating and onerous concessions without a struggle while the companies planned to close more than 20 plants and lay off thousands of workers.

But at that very moment, in December 2008, the Republic Windows and Doors Workers, Local 1110 of United Electrical Workers in Chicago, changed the atmosphere by seizing their plant. They held it for six days and forced Bank of America to grant all their demands for severance pay, holiday pay and benefits. This largely Black and Latino/a group of 250 workers, largely immigrants, electrified the labor movement and became a focus of class solidarity across the country.

While the UE workers were still holding their plant, 5,000 Smithfield workers forced the largest hog-processing plant in the world to recognize the United Food and Commercial Workers in the anti-union state of North Carolina, after more than 15 years of struggle. The victory, one of the biggest in the South in recent years, was achieved by welding together Black, Latino/a, Native American and Asian unity in a struggle that included a large number of immigrant workers.

In the period since then there have been numerous strikes and struggles. A recent nine-week strike by Teamsters at SK Tools in Chicago ended in victory. A strike by Philadelphia transit workers won a victory. Stella D’Oro workers in the Bronx, N.Y., won a valiant year-long strike against concessions, but then the company was sold and the plant closed.

There have been many struggles, but they are carried on in isolation. There has been no attempt by the labor leadership to give major support to any particular struggle or to generate a coordinated fightback.

There are student-worker support networks growing up around the country. The anti-sweatshop movement just had a victory against Russell Athletic, forcing the company to rehire fired workers in Honduras and recognize their union.

Cutbacks in public and private colleges affect students and workers and are leading to student-worker alliances to fight back. Important battles against cutbacks are taking place in California—Los Angeles, Berkeley and other places—involving sit-ins and mass action.

The movement for genuine health care reform is spreading and the labor movement has taken it up, but only symbolically and by lobbying. A mass mobilization for health care is badly needed.

Collectives and independent radical groupings among students and off campus are springing up around the country and moving on a variety of issues—the war, the environment, poverty, cutbacks in social services and so on.

A growing movement against the wave of foreclosures and evictions is developing in Detroit, Minneapolis, Chicago and

other cities.

A labor-led march against the American Bankers Association in Chicago broke into the convention. Many local movements exist but so far are fragmented. However, the basis is being laid for a national movement.

These developments and many more that are bubbling under the surface represent the earliest stirrings of the resistance. It is sure to grow in response to the economic crisis, the war and occupation in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan, the political attacks on the people and other reactionary measures.

**The struggle for jobs.** The overriding issue at present is the struggle for jobs and will continue to be. The Bail Out the People Movement held a Jobs March in Pittsburgh at the time of the G-20 in September to bring the political demand for jobs to the heads of the rich imperialist countries. Shortly thereafter many local unions participated in a labor-led jobs march in Boston.

The Jobs March in Pittsburgh was successful because it got the support and participation of the Black community, as well as the endorsement of the United Steel Workers and the United Electrical Workers. It took a concrete step forward in building the kind of labor/community alliance that is key to future success in the struggle against the crisis.

The Obama administration, under pressure to do something about the jobs crisis, has done nothing but point to the stimulus package, which has done little to stem the tide of 8 million jobs lost since December 2007. The administration is now calling a jobs summit.

For the first time, almost two years into the crisis, the AFL-CIO leadership has finally put a national jobs program on the agenda. It is a legislative program aimed at diverting money into extended workers’ assistance, unemployment insurance, creating jobs by building infrastructure, rebuilding destroyed communities, aiding small business, and so forth.

It is a step forward that the labor leadership has tried to address the crisis on a national level. The program reaches out on behalf of the unemployed. Unemployment is a great danger to the labor movement. It was put forward by AFL-CIO leader Richard Trumka and supported by NAACP President Benjamin Jealous; National Council of La Raza President Janet Murguia; Leadership Conference on Civil Rights President Wade Henderson; and Deepak Bhargava, executive director of the Center for Community Change. President Larry Mishel of the Economic Policy Institute moderated the conversation, which Jealous called the beginning of a national human rights movement for economic opportunity.

The program should give an impetus to the movement for jobs. But it stops

short in many ways, including and especially the failure to promote the absolute need to mobilize the millions inside and outside the labor movement, employed and unemployed, and bring them into the streets and to Washington, D.C., and other cities to confront the establishment and demand jobs.

The movement from below must take up this challenge and promote a jobs march. And it must take up this challenge from an internationalist point of view. The Bail Out the People Movement has called for a jobs march in Washington, D.C., on April 10, the 75th anniversary of Franklin Roosevelt’s Works Progress Administration. A West Coast group of trade unionists has called for building Solidarity Day III in Washington, D.C., in the spring. The ground is being laid for the coalescence of forces to launch a wide-scale struggle for jobs and income.

**International solidarity and unity is the key to victory.** The transnational corporations in the U.S. have used their technology to break up their production processes and spread them across the globe to wherever they can find the lowest wages and the highest rate of exploitation.

They have used this process to set workers all over the world against each other and create a worldwide wage competition in a race to the bottom. As the economic crisis deepens they will try to turn workers in the U.S. against each other—in particular targeting undocumented workers. They will try to divide the working class here from workers abroad by scapegoating workers in the low-wage, formerly colonial countries who are superexploited by the bosses.

This is the same tactic of divide and conquer that they use when they scapegoat undocumented workers and immigrants in general; or when they promote racism to divide white workers from the oppressed workers.

The only way to overcome wage competition and divisive racism and chauvinism is by establishing class consciousness and class solidarity at home and abroad. There must be no borders in the workers’ struggle. Under the new regime of low-wage capitalism, Black, Latino/a, Asian, Native, Middle Eastern and Pacific Islander workers, women and men, straight, gay, lesbian, bi and trans, documented and undocumented are going to play a vanguard role in the class struggle. White workers and all workers must fight against capitalist schemes to divide them from one another.

**An injury to one is an injury to all!**

*Goldstein is author of “Low-Wage Capitalism,” a Marxist analysis of the effect of globalization on the working class. He is also a contributing editor of Workers World newspaper.*

## HIGH TECH, LOW PAY

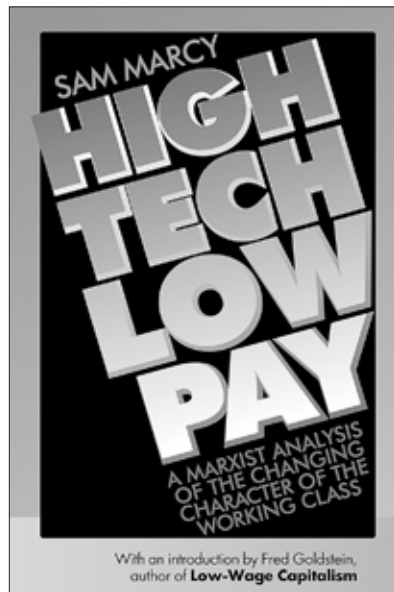
**A Marxist analysis of the changing character of the working class**

**By Sam Marcy** Re-issued for WW’s 50th anniversary.

As wages fall and joblessness rises, this book is as on target today as when it was first published in 1986. Marcy explained how the high-tech revolution destroyed high-paying jobs while it changed the social composition of the working class, bringing more of the oppressed into workplaces, raising the potential for more solidarity and struggle.

A new introduction by Fred Goldstein, author of **Low-Wage Capitalism**, explains the roots of the current economic crisis, with its disastrous unemployment, which has heightened the need for a working-class resurgence.

Available at [Leftbooks.com](http://Leftbooks.com) and bookstores around the country.





# People’s investigation of Fort Hood shootings needed

By Greg Butterfield

The shootings at Fort Hood, Texas, on Nov. 5, which left 13 people dead, have brought into bold relief the terrible strains on soldiers and their families as we enter the eighth year of the alleged “war on terror.”

Washington politicians and Pentagon brass are exploiting the deaths for political gain. A Senate committee headed by Joe Lieberman seeks to conflate the desperate outburst of the alleged shooter, Maj. Nidal Hasan, with a new “terrorist threat,” and to intensify racial profiling inside and outside the military.

Police agencies are exploiting the shooting to obtain more repressive powers. Meanwhile, the corporate-owned media are attempting to implicate Yemeni Imam Anwar al-Aulaqi and the Muslim community as a whole.

But in fact, as ABC News reported Nov.

16, Hasan was repeatedly rebuffed and ignored by his superiors when he sought prosecution of war crimes in Iraq and Afghanistan that were brought to his attention by Army personnel in psychiatric counseling.

An unnamed federal investigator told ABC, “The Army may not want to admit it, and you may not hear much about it, but it was very big for him.” Hasan was also about to be deployed to an overseas combat zone.

Now Hasan faces 13 counts of premeditated murder. Army prosecutors are expected to seek the death penalty. It is obvious that in a military court he cannot receive a fair trial. Will such a trial allow his defense to include information about U.S. war crimes committed against the people of Afghanistan?

The scapegoating of Muslims that has already accompanied this traumatic event presents a real danger of new violent at-

tacks on Arab, South Asian, Black Muslim and other communities. This danger will grow and intensify as the military case against Hasan proceeds.

It comes as Washington is undertaking a new campaign of repression against Muslims and those who dare to defend them, including the FBI assassination of Imam Luqman Ameen Abdullah in Detroit, the seizure of four mosques in New York allegedly linked to Iran, and the revocation of bail for civil rights attorney Lynne Stewart.

**Fort Hood deaths on war-makers hands**

Today millions of military families are struggling to make ends meet. The suicide rate in the U.S. Army will hit an all-time high this year. Workers in the U.S. face the worst unemployment since the Great Depression.

Yet the priority of government and military officials is to make scapegoats while

## Fort Hood, 1968 and 2009

*The following talk was given by John Catalinotto at the WWP National Conference, Nov. 14. View the talk at [www.workers.tv](http://www.workers.tv).*

By any measure 1968 was a tumultuous political year. Millions of young people were resisting the war against Vietnam. The African-American people were in open rebellion against racism.

The year before, in July 1967, rebellions broke out in Newark, N.J., and in Detroit’s African-American community. U.S. troops from the 82nd Airborne Division were sent into Detroit. Forty-three people were killed and thousands injured.

In 1968, the Tet Offensive shook U.S. forces in Vietnam.

The upsurge was international. A workers’ general strike nearly led to revolution in France.

At home, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated and Black rebellions erupted in 160 U.S. cities and towns.

Following Dr. King’s killing, some 5,000 GIs from Fort Hood were sent to Chicago. There the notoriously racist mayor, Richard Daley, ordered “looters and arsonists” shot on sight. At least nine Black civilians died.

By August 1968, Chicago was preparing for massive anti-war demonstrations

set to confront the Democratic National Convention. When Black troops from Fort Hood heard they were being sent to Chicago, 100 spent the night of Aug. 23, 1968, in an all-night assembly of protest. When morning came, military police arrested 43 of the troops.

The soldiers had support. There was the coffee-house movement. And the American Servicemen’s Union—an anti-war and anti-racist GIs’ organization Workers World Party helped build—arranged for legal help. The ASU took a class approach to organizing the rank-and-file GIs against their officers and against the war. ASU chairperson Andy Stapp and I went to Fort Hood to visit the arrested troops and get the stories for publicity and to build popular support.

Fearing publicity and growing solidarity, the brass compromised, giving short sentences and letting many of the GIs off on a technicality. Ellen Catalinotto and I attended the October trial of the six troops the military brass considered the ringleaders. Two got three-month sentences, two got just bad discharges, and two were acquitted.

The mass resistance both to the war and to institutional racism continued to grow within the military to the point where units refused to go into combat.

Once, in 1975, Black troops prevented a U.S. intervention in Angola.

Today, though many troops are unhappy, there is no open rebellion. There is no open resistance outside the military. Inside, there are individual resisters in today’s all-volunteer army.

The killing of 13 soldiers and officers and the wounding of 25 more at Fort Hood is, however, no aberration. It is an integral part of the last eight years of brutal wars of conquest. It brought the war home.

Maj. Nidal Hasan was reportedly distraught because he was recently ordered to deploy to Afghanistan. Born in the U.S. in 1970 of Palestinian parents, Hasan volunteered for the Army out of patriotism and later experienced harassment for being a Muslim, especially after 9/11.

Whatever Hasan’s motives or state of mind, the shooting took place within a political context. It occurred at a nerve center of a bloody and increasingly unpopular war. It occurred as Palestinian desires for



John Catalinotto

WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

their own nation have again been crushed. It occurred within a week of the FBI’s unwarranted execution of a Muslim religious leader in Michigan.

It is hard to predict the impact of the shooting on Pentagon war plans. Our anti-war movement should do the following:

- Resist any attempt to scapegoat the Muslim community in the U.S.
- Raise demands for jobs at decent pay for youth combined with the struggle against these wars of aggression, to eliminate the economic draft, and solidarity with all soldiers who resist.

The killings, apparently by a U.S.-born army officer who identifies with the victims of the imperialist war, expose a basic weakness of U.S. imperialism. We look to it as a symptom of the Pentagon’s political contradictions that may soon enough show up in other forms of generalized resistance.

End the wars now! Get U.S. troops out of the Middle East and Central Asia! □

## World reacts as Dubai’s economy stumbles

By G. Dunkel

The Dubai government announced Nov. 25 that it was “requesting” that its investment company, Dubai World, be allowed to stop making interest payments for six months. This move would have had much more impact if it hadn’t been made the day before “Thanksgiving” in the U.S. and the start of Eid el-Ahda, a three-day Islamic festival.

But this was big news, as Dubai World has run up a debt of \$59 billion in the past few years building glitzy resorts, Las-Vegas-style casinos and other luxury properties, as well as managing ports around the world. (New York Times, Nov. 28) Nakheel, Dubai World’s real estate subsidiary, has borrowed an additional \$21 billion. (Les Echos, Nov. 26)

Dubai is part of the United Arab Emirates, a federation of seven emirates in the southeastern part of the Arabian Peninsula that borders Saudi Arabia, Oman

and the Gulf. While its neighbor Abu Dhabi, also part of the UAE, has vast oil wealth, Dubai’s economy relies on tourism and shipping.

It is unclear if Dubai World will be able to start paying when the six months are over. Dubai’s \$80 billion in debt is equal to 100 percent of the emirate’s 2008 gross domestic product, according to Moody’s Investors Service.

European stock markets fell by 3.2 percent on Nov. 26, the day after Dubai’s announcement. Asian markets also had big losses of between 4 and 5 percent. Bank stocks in France dropped by more than 5 percent in a day and falling share prices wiped \$23 billion off the value of British banks. (The Times of London, Nov. 27.) Oil dropped \$1.80 a barrel and the dollar strengthened against the euro.

Bloomberg News reported that “Most U.S. stocks fell this week as speculation Dubai will default on its debt spurred concern that the recovery in the global fi-

nancial system will stall.” (Nov. 28) U.S. bank stocks, just as in Europe and Asia, fell the most.

Bankers weren’t sure about what kind of exposure they had to a default by Dubai. Other interests were afraid that this uncertainty might lead to a freeze in bank lending, which would stop nearly all normal economic activity.

Gretchen Morgenson, the leading business columnist for the New York Times, summed up the situation: “The news out of Dubai late last week ... reminds us that we are far from finished with a ferocious deleveraging process that began last year.” (Nov. 29)

Even though Dubai carefully avoided mentioning going into default, since Dubai World is owned by a sovereign nation it would be hard for banks and other investors to seize its assets. And there are other highly-leveraged sovereign debtors; in Europe, Lithuania and Greece are the worst off, but Spain and Ireland are

not far behind.

This palpable nervousness about defaults of sovereign debtors, which would pose a more intractable challenge to the world’s financial system than the failure of Lehman Brothers, a private institution, seems to lie behind the UAE central bank’s announcement that it would guarantee Dubai World’s debt. (Wall Street Journal, Nov. 29)

While cost-cutting—mainly by increasing the exploitation of workers under the lash of unemployment and underemployment—has improved the profits of the biggest companies, smaller companies still can’t get the credit they need to function, and their customers are buying less because their income has dropped.

Capitalism needs to expand to survive. When expansion stops and the bubble bursts, it becomes more and more unstable. The Dubai crisis is just another stumble that exposes this instability. □



# After intense internal struggle

# S. Korean gov't admits massacres

By Deirdre Griswold

It took almost 60 years, but the government of south Korea has finally admitted what many in the younger generation had already found out through the progressive movement there: Thousands of civilians were massacred by the south Korean regime at the beginning of the 1950-53 war, for no other reason than that they were considered sympathizers with the communist revolutionaries who had liberated the north of Korea from Japanese rule during World War II and were now battling U.S. imperialism.

What makes the politics around this official revelation even more charged is that it comes during the tenure of a right-wing government in south Korea that has tried to suppress the commission tasked with bringing out the facts.

For many years, if south Koreans spoke about these mass murders by the Syngman Rhee regime, they risked imprisonment and even death. But in the last few decades, a vigorous and courageous people's movement has carried out massive strikes and protests that resulted in the shelving of the brutal military dictatorships imposed on Korea by the U.S. military occupation of the south. In the space these popular movements achieved,

an effort was begun to unearth the truth about the period of the Korean War.

The Korean Truth and Reconciliation Commission was set up in 2005, when a more liberal government was in office than now and efforts were being made to ease the tensions between north and south. But the struggle to tell the truth about the massacres had begun years earlier.

In June of 2000, 50 years after the start of the Korean War, this writer visited the Tae Won Valley—Tae Won means “suppressed sorrow and rage” in Korean—and met scores of south Koreans working with both an Investigations Committee and a Committee of Victims' Families. They were filming and taping oral histories from survivors of the fascist pogroms of 1950.

Yoo Yoon Ham, president of the Committee of Victims' Families, told this reporter that for many years “we were accused of being communist sympathizers, so we couldn't speak out.” But people were finally coming forward with what they knew.

Even earlier, Lee Bong Yon had served eight years in jail for trying to investigate the mass killings. Attempts to get the south Korean government to release secret documents had failed.

On the trip in 2000, visitors were taken to an abandoned cobalt mine outside the

village of Kyengsan. A vertical shaft led down to a cave where you could still see human bones.

Chae Sim Ho of the Investigations Committee told the group that some 3,000 to 3,500 people had been killed in that area by the army and police in 1950. Some had been led to the shaft, bound together in groups of eight, and then shot so that their bodies fell down into the mine. Many were political prisoners who had been held in Taegu Prison under a preventive-detention law dating back to Japanese occupation. (See Workers World article, “Hidden history of Korean War,” June 15, 2000.)

At the time the massacres happened, Gen. Douglas MacArthur was overall operational commander of all military actions in Korea and was therefore responsible for the deeds of the south Korean army.

The current government commission that issued its report this Nov. 26 found it difficult to get cooperation from the police and military. At a news conference in Seoul, members expressed worry that the current government would try to shut the commission down before it could complete its work. They reported they had identified nearly 5,000 people illegally executed by the Syngman Rhee regime. The commission was able to ferret out some old government lists giving names of people who had been killed and showed them at the news conference.

The Committee of Victims' Families was also at the news conference and said this was just the tip of the iceberg. It demanded that the government extend the commission's deadline.

An article in the New York Times appears to be the only acknowledgment by the corporate media in the U.S. of this dramatic development in Korea.

It reported on the difficulty the commission experienced in trying to get information from officials, but said that “Lee Joon-young, 85, a former prison guard who witnessed assembly-line-like executions near Taejon, south of Seoul, in July 1950, was one who stepped forward.

“Ten prisoners were carried to a trench at a time and were made to kneel at the edge,” he said in an interview. ‘Police officers stepped up behind them, pointed their rifles at the back of their heads and fired.’” (New York Times, Nov. 26)

This corroborated the accounts given by unofficial investigating teams and victims' families.

The biggest impediment to this truth-seeking mission is the continued occupation of Korea by U.S. troops, which strengthens the far right in Korean politics. It is no wonder that most of the corporate media have shunned reporting on the reign of terror in the south that accompanied the launching of an all-out war on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the north.

That war, hyped as a struggle for “democracy” and against “totalitarianism,” cost the lives of millions of Koreans and more than 60,000 U.S. troops. In a prequel to Vietnam, the U.S. imperialists, despite all their high-tech weaponry, finally had to admit they could not break the people's resistance and signed an armistice agreement with the DPRK.

But to this day the troops remain and Washington refuses to sign a peace agreement. The U.S. is still technically at war with the DPRK and threatens a new assault with every manufactured “crisis.” Thus, knowing the truth about what happened in Korea after World War II is of the greatest importance to the people of the U.S. as well as to Koreans. □

## Anti-war protests confront escalation in Afghanistan

*Continued from page 1*

The second lie says that the Hamid Karzai regime in Kabul, or any other regime that the U.S.-NATO occupation props up, has more legitimacy than the Afghan resistance. Even the current U.S. posture of making demands on Karzai after a blatantly phony “election” can't change Washington's reliance on corrupt and reactionary forces. And the profits and corruption start with the U.S. military-industrial complex and the Pentagon warlords, who have shown no moral revulsion about making deals with local Afghan military leaders and those running the opium industry.

The third big lie is that the occupation is aimed at improving conditions for Afghan women. After eight years of occupation, Afghan women's life expectancy is 44 years and 85 percent are illiterate. It's true that the Taliban has a reactionary program for women, but so do the forces the U.S. relies on in the puppet regime. What is remarkable is that Afghan women's organizations openly say that as bad as the Taliban was, conditions are now worse for Afghan women, with reactionary laws, war and hunger adding to their suffering.

The Afghan government that had made the most progress for women's rights, that had women running ministries, that had women with rifles across their backs defending it, was the revolutionary government of the 1980s that the Soviet Union supported. At that time the U.S. government, its allies in the region and all its Cold War agencies rallied the most reactionary Afghan forces—which murdered women school teachers—to fight and destroy that government.

In the end the Afghan resistance—which includes, in addition to the Taliban, local forces and secular elements that are the continuation of that progressive Afghan government of 1979 to 1991—will refuse to surrender to the U.S.-NATO at-

tempt at conquest. It will be up to the anti-war forces within the NATO countries, including the U.S., to shorten the time and sacrifices made until the inevitable failure of the occupation. □

### Protests mount as Morocco expels Western Saharan human rights activist

*Excerpted from an article in the Nov. 26 Portuguese weekly, Avante. The struggle for independence of the Western Sahara from Morocco has been represented by the POLISARIO front.*

Morocco is intensifying its repressive policy against the Saharan people, according to the president of the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic, Mohamed Abdelaziz. The evidence for this fact is the recent expulsion from the country of political activist Aminatu Haidar.

Last Nov. 14 Haidar was returning from the United States when Moroccan authorities stopped her from entering El Aiun and reuniting with her family. Instead the next day they sent her, without her passport, to Lanzarote in the Canary Islands [Spain]. Though her health had been damaged by past stays in Moroccan prisons, the 42-year-old Saharan stayed in the airport in that city and began a hunger strike to protest the decision of the government in Rabat [Morocco].

[Among the many protesting internationally were] Portuguese writer José Saramago. In his text, the Nobel-for-Literature winner wrote: “In relation to the Western Sahara, Morocco oversteps all the norms of good conduct” and appeals to the Spanish government for Haidar and the people of the Western Sahara.

## INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS

By John Catalinotto

“We should let Aminatu go back to her home with the recognition of her worth, in the light of day, because it is people like her who give personality to our time and without Aminatu all of us would surely be poorer.”

### 250,000 public workers strike in Ireland

Nurses, teachers, firefighters and other public workers in Ireland walked out Nov. 24 to protest budget cuts that threaten the services they perform and their pay and pensions. As many as 250,000 workers succeeded in stopping most government services for the day, except in Ireland's flooded areas where the unions suspended the strike. All public offices and schools were closed.

After more than a decade of rapid economic growth, Ireland has become one of the European countries hit hardest by the collapse in the housing market and the economic downturn. The government and ruling capitalists—like capitalists all over—have been placing the costs of the crisis on the working class. A section of organized labor is finally saying, “Enough.”

The unions have said they cannot take any more wage cuts after an emergency budget earlier this year already imposed cuts on the workers. “Nobody wants a public service strike,” a group of more than 10 unions said in an advertisement placed in newspapers Nov. 24. “Ireland's

international image doesn't need it. ... It's happening because the government is refusing to seriously consider alternatives to more public service pay cuts.”

### U.S.-built flying gas tank crashes in Pisa, Italy

One of the Italian Air Force's C-130J cargo planes, built by Lockheed Martin, crashed shortly after takeoff Nov. 23. It burst into flames on a track of the Rome-Pisa-Genoa line, not far from a train. All five crew members were killed, but no one on the ground.

An article published in the Nov. 24 issue of Il Manifesto by Manlio Dinucci, an expert on NATO militarism, exposes the expanded role of this C-130J. A notice in Flight International made it clear that the plane was one of 22 C-130Js that have been modified so that instead of simply transporting large amounts of equipment, they can be used as flying tanks to refuel helicopters, jet fighters and bombers in the air, two at a time. Thus they can be used to help the Italian military operate quickly at long distances—for example, while supporting the U.S. attempt to occupy and subdue Afghanistan.

The Pisa center-left government had already made the decision to prepare civil defense measures, like evacuation of the wounded, in case of a possible aerial disaster—such as one of the C-130Js exploding with a large amount of fuel on board. □



# Coup ‘election’ flops

Even the most polished spinmasters, whose job is to convince the public that fantasy is reality and the tail wags the dog, are having a hard time with this one. The Honduran “election” of Nov. 29 was a dismal flop both for the oligarchy’s coup makers and for the U.S. politicians behind them.

The Honduran resistance, which has been bringing vigorous demonstrations into the streets on a daily basis since the kidnapping and ouster of elected President Manuel Zelaya this summer, reports there was the highest abstention rate in that country’s history: from 65 percent to 70 percent of the electorate didn’t vote. This non-election was a victory for those who refused to legitimize an illegitimate regime.

Throughout Latin America and much of the rest of the world, the coup in Honduras is seen as a dangerous example of what the imperial strategists are plotting for the region. As one country after another votes in leftist parties—the latest example is Uruguay, where a former guerrilla leader who spent 14 years in prison was just elected president—the U.S. is expanding its military bases in the region. It may still try to cover its dirty deeds with democratic phrase-mongering, but actions speak louder than words.

In Honduras, the military deposed the elected president when he tried to raise the minimum wage and carry out other reforms. They put in as the new head of state a rightist committed to continuing the rule of a tiny oligarchy over the impoverished majority. Feigning surprise, the U.S. government at first appeared ambivalent about the coup. Virtually all the countries of Latin America, and much of the world, refused to recognize the usurpers. Brazil opened its embassy in the Honduran capital to Zelaya after he surreptitiously returned in September from his imposed exile. He has been there ever since, surrounded by troops who violently break up demon-

strations supporting him.

Even though this regime is considered an international pariah, the White House and State Department have now given their blessing to the fraudulent “election.” In so doing, they have made it very clear that the Honduran coup, like so many others in the past when Latin America was plagued with brutal military dictatorships, was made in the USA.

Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez was clear about this when he spoke to the 19th Ibero-American summit in Portugal the day after the election farce in Honduras. He called for a statement to reject the election and warned that the development of an aggressive U.S. military doctrine, the reactivation of the Fourth Fleet and the establishment of military bases in Colombia constitute a threat to all of Latin America.

“A dictatorship has been started in Honduras, through a military coup, with U.S. instigation and support,” said Rodriguez.

“To recognize the spurious government emerging from these illegitimate elections will betray principles of peace, democracy and justice. We have a deep conviction that the Honduran people, with their struggle, will have the last word.” Rodriguez pinpointed what was at stake: “The aim is domination and interference, to get the U.S. military power closer to the rich sources of raw materials and energy resources the region has,” he told the gathering.

The National Resistance Front called the extremely low turnout at the polls a “great victory for the Honduran people,” and called on them to continue confronting the military in the streets. There can be no equivocating on this struggle. The people of Honduras have risen up against misery, hunger and a brutal oligarchy tied to U.S. corporations that have squeezed the country dry. The progressive forces of the world, especially in the U.S., must stand with them. □

## Never forget the real history of America

*Continued from page 2*

beware! You never know when your wars, your bigotry, your poisons—your whole legacy—will come back to haunt you! While you gorge yourself, we will celebrate today as a day of mourning and fasting for our ancestors and our land. We know the observation comes before the feast.

As an activist and political prisoner here in the “land of the free,” I respect and support the mission of UAINE. You, as well as the American Indian Movement and Indian people of various organizations, have pursued honorable goals even when you got beaten and oppressed for doing so. We as Indian people must never let this country or the world forget that we were here. In your area specifically, Wampanoags, Narragansetts and others flourished

in harmony with the land and sea. We thrived. We welcomed outsiders and they survived only through our generosity. For our troubles we suffered unjust wars, had our lands stolen, received disease-infested blankets, and continue to experience treaty violations. You are at ground zero of our genocide. You are patient zero.

I know you will never forget or allow others to forget the real history of America. Let them sit on Plymouth Rock until they see the errors of their ways! Stay united! Stay committed to the struggle! Never give up the fight! We were here! We are still here! We will always be here! Shout it with me—HOKA HEY! Mitakuye Oyasin!

**In the Spirit of Crazy Horse,  
Leonard Peltier**

# Protests in U.S. denounce fraudulent Honduran elections

## LOS ANGELES

Although the Los Angeles Times estimates that 40,000 Hondurans live in Los Angeles, only a few hundred participated in the Honduran presidential elections on Nov. 29. They were met with a barrage of chants, banners, placards and music urging them not to participate in an “election” run by a military coup government. More than 70 protestors kept up a nonstop flow of chants, speeches, music, cheers and jeers from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. that echoed off the walls of the Evans Community Adult School.

Most of the cheers came around 2 p.m., when demonstrators got a report from a Honduran news radio station over the Internet. It said that the election had become a fiasco, with so little turnout that it would be hard to qualify as an official election.

Throughout the day coup supporters were allowed to poster and leaflet and give doughnuts to people entering the polls. However, police did not even allow protestors to pass out literature. And they had to remain across the street from the polling site.

This, however, wasn’t unfair enough for some coup supporters. One of the supporters of the election used his car as a weapon against peaceful demonstrators.

Protesters surrounded his car and made it clear to him that it was in his best interest to move on—and he did.

The protest action was organized by the Los Angeles Coalition for Peace and Democracy in Honduras (Coalición por la Paz y la Democracia en Honduras).

—John Parker



Los Angeles

WW PHOTO: CHERYL LABASH



Rebel Diaz performs during protest at SOA.

PHOTOS BY LINDA PANETTA



WW PHOTO: GLORIA RUBAC

## HOUSTON

A spirited and militant demonstration was held outside of the Houston polling place set aside for Honduran citizens to vote in their country’s election. With several bullhorns and dozens of colorful signs, protestors took turns on the microphone to urge Hondurans to boycott the elections.

“Elections cannot be held while Honduras is being terrorized by the military regime and people are being arrested, beaten, murdered, raped and disappeared every day. You have an elected president—support José Manuel Zelaya!” Cristobal Hinojosa, an organizer with Mexicanos en Acción, shouted to those attempting to vote.

An organizer with the newly formed Houston Committee in Solidarity with the People of Honduras, Evelyn Silva, urged her fellow Hondurans to boycott the elections. “The elections are not legal. Zelaya is our legally elected president and the military coup is illegal. Do not vote in this fraudulent election to legitimize the coup!”

Several carloads of voters turned away after seeing the protest and two young Honduran women visiting Houston joined the demonstration. The multinational protestors included people from Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Colombia and Venezuela, as well as African Americans, Chicanos and whites from Houston, Austin and Dallas.

—Gloria Rubac

# Thousands demand closing of ‘School of Assassins’

**By Dianne Mathiowetz  
Fort Benning, Ga.**

Twenty years ago, six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and her 15-year-old daughter were viciously murdered in El Salvador by military forces trained at the School of the Americas, located at Fort Benning in Columbus, Ga. They are just a few of the many tens of thousands of victims killed, tortured, beaten and “disappeared” in countries from Argentina to Chile to Colombia to Honduras, in military coups and massacres carried out by the graduates of this U.S. training school.

The annual School of the Americas protest has grown from a handful of seasoned activists to thousands, with each year the percentage of

young people becoming greater and greater. The program for the Nov. 20-22 action included workshops, films, concerts, a rally with speakers and music, the famous puppetista parade, civil disobedience and the Sunday “presente” memorial—as the names of those killed by SOA-trained soldiers are solemnly intoned.

Speakers included peasant activists from Colombia, U.S. military veterans, torture survivors from several countries, farm workers from Immokalee, Fla., and labor, student and religious leaders. The presence of Bertha Oliva from Honduras was especially significant. Her message conveyed the strong spirit of the opposition to the military coup that has united Hondurans from all sectors of society.

Among the cultural performers were Rebel



# Major gatherings assess women's progress in Africa

By Abayomi Azikiwe  
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

Two recent conferences held on the African continent reaffirmed the determination of women to achieve genuine equality and political empowerment. The Eighth Africa Regional Conference on Women (Beijing+15) took place in Banjul, Gambia, in West Africa, Nov. 16-20. It featured reports on progress made towards achieving the goals adopted during the U.N. Fourth World Conference on Women, which was held in Beijing in 1995.

The Pan-African Women Conference 2009 was held in Sandton, South Africa, October 21-23. This yearly gathering is sponsored by Pan-African Women Projects and a network of women's groups and organizations from around the continent.

Every year, women from the 54 African nations as well as the Diaspora participate in the PAWC. The theme of this year's conference was "African Women Marching against Poverty."

A statement by the event's organizers declares, "African women have decided to fight poverty both in homes and in the continent as from the previous conferences, it was clearly understood and unanimously agreed that the primary cause of all the problems facing the African woman and Africa in general is this ugly cankerworm called POVERTY." (panafricanwomenconference.org)

The statement points out: "Poverty has caused coups and wars in the nations of Africa. It has given birth to numerous ills including deaths, crime, prostitution and human trafficking, forced and early marriages, illiteracy, child labour and slavery, recruitment of child soldiers, etc."

The conference was attended by more than 3,000 women from various regions. Hajia Turai Yar'Adua, first lady of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and chairperson of the Association of Wives of Heads of States/Presidents of Africa, delivered the opening address.

The keynote address was delivered by Graca Machel-Mandela, spouse of former South African President Nelson Mandela and a major figure in conflict mediation and child welfare on the continent. Eighteen presentations were delivered at the PAWC, including ministers representing women's affairs and social development from various African states.

One of the PAWC's highlights was the formal launching of the blueprint for a Pan-African Women's Bank that would provide credit for development projects benefiting women and girls on the continent. In addition, the architectural design for the Pan-African Women Projects' headquarters was unveiled by the president of the Republic of Liberia, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf.

*Continued from page 10*

Diaz and the Indigo Girls, as well as dozens of singers, musicians and spoken word artists from across the U.S. and Latin America. The announcement that Father Roy Bourgeois and the SOA Watch had been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize brought a cheer from the audience.

As in years past, there was planned civil disobedience. Four people were arrested for entering onto the base property. They face months of imprisonment for their actions.

For more information on the campaign to shut down the SOA, go to [www.soaw.org](http://www.soaw.org). □

## Women meet in Banjul

The Eighth Africa Regional Conference on Women (Beijing+15) met to assess progress in the ongoing struggle for gender equality and empowerment on the continent. Prior to the conference, experts met November 13-14 to discuss and prepare recommendations for the ministerial gathering that was held Nov. 16-19.

On Nov. 21, ministers of Women and Gender Affairs convened to consider numerous African Union documents related to women and gender issues, including the Women's Trust Fund feasibility study, the African Union Commission Gender Action Plan and the Roadmap for the African Women's Decade, slated for 2010-2020. The meeting also provided reports on the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa.

In the opening ceremony of the ministerial meeting, the director of Women, Gender and Development Directorate, Litha Musyimi-Ogana, reiterated the political commitment of the AU to gender equality and empowerment for women.

So far 27 AU member states have ratified the Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Women and 30 have addressed the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa. Musyimi-Ogana, speaking on behalf of AU Commission chairperson, Jean Ping, reaffirmed the organization's commitment to develop an African Women Trust Fund, stating that "this move will pave the way for the realization of the objectives presented in the Road Map for the African Women's Decade and in the Decade Action Plan." (AU press release, Nov. 21)

Julia Dolly Joiner, political affairs commissioner of the AU Commission, placed

the conference within the context of the global economic crisis, saying, "We gather at a time when the financial, economic and environmental crises that the world faces together represent no other than a human rights crisis and increasingly pose a challenge to the 12-point women's empowerment and gender equality agenda that we had set for ourselves in Beijing in 1995." (Foroyaa Online, Nov. 24)

Joiner emphasized: "This reality is more apparent for Africa than any other part of the globe. The consequence for us is clear—we must respond to the voices of the marginalized who call on us to act in a situation where their human rights took a backseat to a globalization that swept the world into a frenzy of growth and environmental degradation. At this time of crisis, we are all called upon to be bold in thought and action, as we strive to move towards a system that is inclusive, sustainable and respectful of universal rights."

In a major address, Monique Rakotomalala, director of the African Centre for Gender and Social Development of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, indicated that after the Beijing+15 conference several major objectives had been identified for action. One major area was maternal health and mortality, noting that women should not die anymore while giving birth.

Rakotomalala emphasized: "In the context of high food prices due to the impact of global warming, the meeting must act to ensure food security as a right for women. Action applies also to employment as it paves the way to empowerment." She ended her address by pledging UNECA's commitment to work with the AU in implementing the outcomes of the confer-

ence and to develop young women leaders. (AU press release, Nov. 21)

Dr. Aja Isatou Njie-Saidy, vice-president of the host nation, the Republic of Gambia, said in her conference address that participants must "review progress, analyze current challenges and plan the way forward for ensuring the advancement and empowerment of women and girls, the poor and the most marginalized members of our society." (AU press release, Nov. 21)

Njie-Saidy stated that the African Women's Decade 2010-2020 will provide "impetus for African women as it will provide them with the opportunity to consolidate gains made in the quest to attain gender equality and to close existing gaps that serve as barriers to the attainment of these laudable goals." She said that the AU Fund for Women "will provide the much needed resources that women need to concretize their dreams and ambitions. Africa is on the move and the trend is irreversible."

The resolutions from the Banjul conference will be presented to the upcoming U.N. Commission on the Status of Women, to be held in New York in March.

Two panels were convened at the Banjul conference by Women in Law and Development in Africa. One panel entitled "Women's rights implementation in Africa: what has been achieved so far" was held on Nov. 17.

A Nov. 18 panel focused on "Women's access to land: issues, challenges and expectations of West Africa rural women." The panel examined issues involving women farmers and their access to land in West Africa and the need to advocate for national and local authorities to develop policies geared toward women's sustainable access to land. □

## Understanding and fighting

# The roots of women's & LGBT oppression

*The following excerpted talk was given by Fight Imperialism, Stand Together organizer LeiLani Dowell, at the WWP National Conference, Nov. 14. View this talk at [www.workers.tv](http://www.workers.tv).*

It is not an overstatement to say that in every struggle against oppression in the U.S. in the past 50 years, the Party has been there. This is undoubtedly true with regards to our history in the struggle for liberation of women and lesbian, gay, bi and trans people.

In 1970, the women of Youth Against War and Fascism—the Party's youth wing—formed a Women's Caucus. This caucus organized the first major demonstration of the women's liberation movement in New York, which marched to the Women's House of Detention.

In 1971, WWP marched in the second-ever LGBT Pride march. And we haven't stopped marching. In fact, each year Comrade Marsha makes a new placard—this year it was "WWP marching with Pride for 38 years."

We've also made big contributions to the theoretical understanding of these oppressions. In 1971, Workers World Party co-founder Dorothy Ballan wrote "Feminism and Marxism." Ballan answered the position that the oppression of women has been an eternal struggle. Ballan explained that such teachings about the "innate nature" of social conditions only help a ruling class that would like to maintain those conditions.

Ballan raised the findings of Freder-



LeiLani Dowell

WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

ick Engels, who used anthropological findings to prove that the oppression of women only arose with the development of surplus wealth and class society. The earliest recorded societies were actually matriarchal, with a division of labor but without the sexism that exists today.

Ballan also raised the necessary connection between the struggle for women's liberation and the struggle against racism. She challenged white women who refused to recognize the added oppression that women of color face, and who engender white supremacy by assuming the right to campaign against male supremacy in communities of color.

Five years later, Comrade Bob McCubbin would produce "The Gay Question," which was later updated with the title,

"The Roots of Lesbian and Gay Oppression." At a time when many other political tendencies either ignored the LGBT question or even denounced homosexuality as a "deformity of capitalism," the book was truly groundbreaking as a Marxist analysis of LGBT oppression.

Bob asserted that LGBT oppression rose in tandem with women's oppression, as a product of class society. When men learned to domesticate large animals—learned from the women, that is—that domestication led to the development of more than was needed for immediate survival, or a surplus. In order to hold on to that surplus wealth, the patriarchal system was imposed, with wealth passing down through the lineage of the male.

Women's equality and gender and sex variance posed a challenge to this new patriarchal system. They had to be repressed.

Through it all, we have always maintained an independent, class-based line on the struggle. While we fight against every manifestation of oppression, we fight above all to overturn the capitalist system that fuels and thrives on that oppression.

Today, we see the same forces of repression attempting to tell us that marriage is between a man and a woman, and not a social/economic contract. We see them challenging our rights to full health care, including our reproductive needs. We see the continued attacks, bashings, rapes, etc., on ourselves and our loved ones.

And it's so helpful to have our legacy of analysis and struggle to keep us fighting on the front lines. □



# La crisis y la perspectiva de resistencia: un esquema

Por Fred Goldstein, autor de *Low-Wage Capitalism* (*Capitalismo de salarios bajos*), un análisis de los efectos de la globalización en la clase obrera. Redactor asistente del Periódico *Workers World/Mundo Obrero*

**DEPRESIÓN** La crisis actual es la peor desde la gran depresión. Pero no es sólo la peor crisis desde la depresión. Tiene los mismos elementos fundamentales que la depresión.

**EL SISTEMA NO SE RECUPERARÁ.** Es similar no sólo por el aumento en el desempleo; no sólo porque se han gastado tantos millones de millones de dólares para evitar el colapso del sistema capitalista; no sólo por la ruptura de la gran burbuja especulativa; y no sólo por el sufrimiento generalizado de los/as trabajadores/as y las comunidades.

Es similar a la depresión, que duró 10 años y terminó sólo con una guerra mundial, porque el sistema capitalista no va a tener una verdadera recuperación económica — es decir, una expansión capitalista de tal magnitud que podría superar la profunda crisis de desempleo generalizado.

La economía capitalista en los Estados Unidos sólo se recuperó de la depresión por el enorme gasto del gobierno en los preparativos para la guerra y en la guerra misma. Sin ese gasto no hubiera habido los mercados y la demanda por los productos de la industria estadounidense. La depresión sólo se hubiese profundizado. El capitalismo estaba sufriendo una crisis de sobreproducción que había alcanzado el punto de la no recuperación.

**LOS MEDIOS DE RECUPERACIÓN SE HAN AGOTADO.** Después de la segunda guerra mundial, la economía capitalista de los EEUU se mantuvo por las guerras: la guerra de Corea, la guerra de Vietnam y el gasto para un gran aumento del aparato militar contra la Unión Soviética y China durante la guerra fría, incluyendo 2 millones de millones de dólares en el programa en contra de la URSS de Reagan.

También se mantuvo vertiendo dinero en los bancos y empresas en momentos cruciales de crisis. El gobierno capitalista rescató a la Chrysler; rescató a las asociaciones de ahorro y préstamo en el decenio de 1980; rescató a Wall Street después del

desplome de 1987: el fondo de coberturas del Long Term Capital en 1999. Vertió dinero en el mercado de la vivienda y en Wall Street durante la recesión del 2000-2001.

El capital ha mantenido sus ganancias altas y estimuló su expansión al bajar los salarios despiadadamente a través de la reestructuración tecnológica, acabando con los sindicatos y fomentando una competencia de salarios en todo el mundo para bajar los salarios.

El imperialismo en sí es un signo de crisis en el sistema capitalista. Esto significa que el sistema no puede avanzar dentro de los confines del estado nacional por los medios económicos “normales”. Debe ir al exterior a robar y saquear los pueblos de Asia, África, América Latina y el Oriente Medio para buscar súper ganancias.

Ahora el Pentágono está atascado en Afganistán y Pakistán; aún tiene más de 100.000 tropas en Iraq. El presupuesto militar es de 700 mil millones de dólares para el próximo año — suficiente dinero para reconstruir las ciudades en estado de descomposición y volver a colocar a los/as trabajadores/as a sus puestos de trabajo. Pero Washington no ha sido capaz de conquistar territorios y pagar por sus guerras de agresión con ganancias provenientes del exterior. El intento de expandir el imperio se ha convertido en un desgaste en el sistema y está agravando la crisis doméstica.

Todos estos medios ya han sido llevados al límite. Billones dólares de dinero en rescates no han podido reactivar la economía y detener los despidos. El ejército ahora está súper desarrollado; lo que queda es de altísima tecnología y no puede movilizar a millones de trabajadores/as en la producción de la guerra. Los salarios han ido bajando durante 30 años y la clase trabajadora se ha empobrecido. Las fuentes históricas de reactivación se han agotado.

**A LOS/AS TRABAJADORES/AS SE LES ESTÁ DICIENDO LA MENTIRA DE QUE LAS COSAS MEJORARÁN.** La clase trabajadora en los Estados Unidos ha vivido 10 recesiones luego de la 2da Guerra Mundial. Después de cada una el sistema revivió y se expandió; los empleos eventualmente retornaron para la gran mayoría de los/as trabajadores/as.

La administración de Obama, diversos

medios de comunicación y economistas denominados “expertos” continuamente hacen hincapié en esta idea. Le dicen a los/as trabajadores/as que se necesita tiempo para recuperar la economía y que los empleos vendrán pero se tardan más en venir, así que esperen.

Mientras tanto, el congreso continúa extendiendo las prestaciones del seguro por desempleo y la asistencia de los cupones de alimentos para poder mantener pasivos/as a los/as trabajadores/as y evitar un movimiento de resistencia.

Esta esperanza de que deben soportar durante un tiempo suficiente para que mejoren las cosas está conformando la psicología general de los/as trabajadores/as en este momento. Pero esto es temporero, porque la crisis sólo está comenzando a develarse. Se debe subrayar una y otra vez que la crisis está en sus primeras etapas. Hay muchas semillas de las crisis que vendrán en el futuro.

## ERA DE LA “RECUPERACIÓN SIN TRABAJOS”

Los/as trabajadores/as se enfrentan a una recuperación interminable sin trabajos. Una recuperación sin trabajos es donde la producción y las ganancias comienzan a recuperarse pero el desempleo sigue siendo el mismo o empeora. Esta tendencia en la economía capitalista de los EEUU comenzó en 1991 y se ha ido agravando.

Durante todas las crisis en el período de post-guerra, los puestos de trabajo retornaron cuando la producción comenzó a elevarse. Sin embargo, después de la recesión de 1991, o se perdieron trabajos o ninguno se agregó por más de 12 meses después de la recuperación capitalista. Tomó 18 meses para llegar a los niveles de empleo que había antes de la recesión.

La recuperación actual sin empleos es una continuación de esta tendencia en un nivel mucho más drástico. La economía se informó que había crecido a una tasa anual del 3,5 por ciento en el tercer trimestre de 2009. ¡Pero durante estos tres meses de reactivación económica, se han perdido 726.000 puestos de trabajo! Estas cifras no cuentan con el aumento de millones de trabajadores/as desalentados/as o trabajadores/as forzados/as a trabajar a tiempo parcial.

**PRODUCTIVIDAD LABORAL, SALARIOS BAJOS Y LA CRISIS.** Nada muestra la crisis del capitalismo más que el hecho de que la rentabilidad y el aumento de la producción tienen lugar sobre la base del recorte de puestos de trabajo. Además, esos/as trabajadores/as que aún están empleados/as están siendo presionados/as a que trabajen más duro, más rápido y que produzcan más. Los salarios se están recortando mientras la gerencia aprovecha hasta el último minuto la mano de obra.

Durante tres décadas la innovación tecnológica despiadada ha estado dirigida en contra de los/as trabajadores/as. El capitalismo ha hecho que los/as trabajadores/as sean más productivos/as. Con la tecnología, ha transferido las destrezas de los/as trabajadores/as a las máquinas y al software. La gerencia siempre ha tratado de reducir las destrezas de los/as trabajadores/as y pagarles menos. Ir a la escuela para aprender una destreza no beneficiará realmente a las masas, ya que los capitalistas están destruyendo los empleos cualificados.

Los jefes han utilizado la crisis para intensificar la productividad. Sus planes son reducir la contratación si hay una recuperación. Esto muestra cuán imposible será, en virtud del sistema de ganancias, la recontractación de las decenas de millones de trabajadores/as que se encuentran ahora desempleados/as o sub-empleados/as.

El capitalismo estadounidense ha seguido la lógica inevitable del sistema de ganancias hasta su final. El capital debe tratar de reducir la mano de obra y los salarios implacablemente. Esta es la otra cara de la búsqueda de ganancias. Pero el capital también debe expandirse, si no muere. Por lo tanto, al destruir los salarios, deberá destruir su mercado, al mismo tiempo que amplía su capacidad para producir. Este proceso ha alcanzado el punto donde está conduciendo a un colapso total de la sociedad — y plantea una amenaza para la existencia de la clase trabajadora y de todo el planeta.

La clase trabajadora desconoce esta tendencia a largo plazo del capitalismo y de la magnitud de la crisis actual. Pero se dará cuenta cuando se profundice la crisis y no desaparezca. Es sólo una cuestión de tiempo antes de que comience a luchar como clase. □

**Libertad para los cinco compatriotas cubanos que defendieron a su país del terrorismo y que ahora están presos en EE.UU. por evitar muertes en la isla.**



Gerardo Hernández Nordelo, Ramón Labañino Salazar, Rene González Schwerert Antonio Guerrero Rodríguez y Fernando González Llort.